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ABSTRACT

The relationship between administrative work in higher education and student learning is explored. A conceptual framework for thinking about the relationship is derived from reflecting on relevant literature. Implications for research and practice are discussed to guide readers in improving educational policy and advancing the application of new theoretical contexts for study. The premise underlying the developed model is that to the extent that administrative behavior supports the work of faculty and nurtures a learning climate where students are able to access and take advantage of available opportunities for cognitive and affective growth, then learning outcomes will be influenced positively. Conversely, administrative behaviors that hinder faculty work and create barriers to the development of stimulating intellectual and social climates have the potential for negative impact on student learning outcomes. Propositions are listed to frame a paradigm for researchers and practitioners alike who are interested in examining departmental change and the restructuring of administrative work in the interest of student learning. These include: (1) student evaluations of teaching; (2) student advisement; (3) cooperative instructional activities; and (4) faculty assessment. The new organizational ethos called for in this paper will require a new kind of leadership focus in academic units to make a learning centered structure that facilitates student learning. (Contains 1 table, 3 figures, and 32 references.) (SLD)

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Linking Administrative Behavior and Student Learning: The Learning Centered Academic Unit

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Background

The separation between administrative and instructional contexts is a reality of academic life. Birnbaum (1988) believes that administration has nothing to do with learning. He theorizes that because student learning outcomes commonly fall outside the particular constraints defining an administrator's function, that they have little reason to pay attention to learning. Similarly, Ewell (1985) asserts that administrators tend to campus priorities other than student learning and that their work is decoupled from instructional activity.

Early pioneers of the loose coupling concept, Meyer and Rowan (1983) believe that educational administrators have little direct control over instructional work. Loose coupling of instructional technology (Meyer & Rowan, 1978; Weick, 1976) with institutional structures enables administrative decision-making with little regard for how outcomes influence student learning. Wide acceptance of the loose coupling concept may indeed serve to frustrate administrative considerations of student learning in routine decision-making. Taking a somewhat different perspective, Mintzberg's (1973) study of managerial work acknowledged the hectic pace at which managers work, affording them little time to consider the impact of alternative decisions beyond the boundaries of the functional context.

These perspectives from the literature provide convincing justification for why the link between administrative work and student learning outcomes has been largely ignored in higher education research. It is suggested that a widely accepted belief expressed by Banta and Kuh (1998) that faculty and student affairs professionals know students best,

has frustrated a more expansive view of student outcomes which implicate all participants in the campus community as instrumental to student learning.

Despite the belief that that there is, in fact, deliberate activity on the part of administrators to create environments which positively impact student learning (Peterson, 1988), a review of the literature picking up where Peterson's work left off, revealed no empirical research establishing a conclusive link between administrative behavior and student learning. I would speculate that this oversight is an unfortunate by-product of closely held paradigms about the separation of academic and administrative work. Haberman (1972), however, is not as forgiving. He believes the oversight represents a deliberate effort to protect administrators from accountability with respect to what is viewed by society as the primary purpose of higher education institutions. Such protection, he asserts, is important if faculty are to be attracted to serve in administrative posts which hold no status within their disciplinary community and for which their academic training has offered no preparation.

It is curious to me, given these realities, to what extent higher education might be compromising its ability to optimize the learning experience for students given our failure to explore in more depth the potential synergies between these two core activities. This question prompted the examination of the relationship between administrative work and student learning set forth in the following pages. A conceptual framework for thinking about the relationship is derived from reflecting on relevant literature. Implications for research and practice are intended to offer guidance to readers on improving educational policy and practice and advancing the application of new theoretical contexts for study.

Explaining Administrator Impact

Before examining impact of administrator behavior it is useful to establish a common understanding of its definition. Encompassed in the conception of administrative behavior for purpose of this argument are behaviors of those holding administrative posts in higher education that are exhibited in their conduct of management and decision-making activity. There are a plethora of measures in the management literature which might be used to describe not only what administrators and managers do, but how they do it. By way of example, one framework offered by Yukl's (1989) integrative taxonomy focuses on observed behaviors allowing study of what administrators do. Yukl categorizes behaviors into four clusters relationship-building, influencing, decision-making, and information-sharing. Bolman and Deal's (1984, 1997) framework on the other hand, conceptualizes behaviors in terms of four cognitive orientations individuals apply in interpreting their organizational environment. The premise used in applying their *four frames* to behavior is that the orientations prompt unique behaviors that suggest how managers approach the activities they conduct in their work roles. Behaviors can then be described as expressing structural, human resources, political, and symbolic orientations to work, and thus determine *how* administrators behave.

The structural conditions in colleges and universities well explain the bifurcation of work associated with administrative and academic functions. However, a close examination of the work of administrators suggests that their behaviors might potentially exert influence on student learning both in and outside the classroom. The existence of

such a linkage is supported in the literature, most notably in Pascarella and Terenzini's (1991) studies of student outcomes in college. Acknowledging that administrators exert significant control over campus affairs and climates, Pascarella and Terenzini set the stage for thoughtful examination of the role of administrators in influencing student cognitive and affective learning outcomes.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) concluded that student learning is indirectly influenced by administrative action. Such a conclusion stems from their belief that university executive and other administrative officers set the "tone and standards" (p.656) for participants in campus life. Applying this notion to practice, administrators facilitate access to learning experiences by directing students to learning resources, organizing learning environments (advising, tutoring programs), and in larger, more complex institutions, may act as gatekeepers and mediators in the faculty-student relationship. Higher level administrators such as provosts, deans, and directors also engage in decision-making activity related to distribution of resources which have impact on learning processes and thus, the outcomes of student learning.

Pascarella and Terenzini's (1991) study of college student outcomes informs rather specifically the notion of a link between administrator behavior and student learning. First, these researchers found that the departmental environment helps to shape psychosocial changes i.e. the way students learn to relate to their external world. From their examination of between-college differences, they concluded that institutional context, or policies, practices, and interpersonal climate, may indeed make a difference in students' psychosocial development. The chief responsibilities of administrators is decision-making associated with development of policy and practice, thus to a large

degree their actions determine the institutional context. Consequently, there is reason to believe that administrators can indeed influence student learning outcomes. Pascarella and Terenzini's findings with respect to development of students' social self-concepts provide additional support. They found self-concept to be negatively impacted in institutions where student social interactions with faculty and peers were inhibited. This suggests that administrative actions that result in increasing student access to faculty may indirectly influence some psychosocial dimensions of student learning.

While we tend to look to a student's academic endeavors for primary influences on cognitive development, the literature supports the role of social context as well in shaping and supporting cognitive outcomes. Tinto (1975) afforded considerable significance to the social involvement of students in determining their persistence in college. In a similar vein, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) argue that cognitive and intellectual growth is enhanced by greater integration between the academic and social activities of students. It can be argued then that administrative behaviors which serve to either create social opportunities for stimulation of the intellect, or increase student awareness of such opportunities, also have the potential for enhancing cognitive development.

Centra (1993) acknowledges the role of administrators in supporting a teaching culture. Further evidence of administrator involvement in student learning outcomes is demonstrated by Kuh, Douglas, Lund, and Ramin-Gyurnek (1994) in two of the conditions they set forth for fostering student learning. These are (a) human scale settings characterized by ethics of membership and care; and, (b) an ethos of learning that pervades all aspects of the institution. Administrators play an important role in

contributing to, and in many instances leading, the framing and cultivation of such settings in two ways - - first, by breaking down barriers between units and functions and second, by stimulating a climate and culture supportive of these conditions.

Finally, Bess' (1988) review of administrative decision-making associated with each of Parson's functional prerequisites for every social system allows us to better understand the impact of academic administrators on the student college experience. Bess argues that a variety of decisions are required to satisfy each of Parson's (1971) four functional prerequisites every social system needs to satisfy to survive. Decisions related to organizational *goal attainment* make salient the objectives of the organization through transforming inputs into valued outputs. Curriculum decisions fall in this category for example, as they determine the marketability of graduates. Decisions associated with motivating faculty and other administrators toward organizational goals, e.g. student learning, is especially relevant to the topic under discussion. The *adaptation* function describes the requirement to secure adequate resources to perform the work of the organization. Relevant decisions here would relate to budgeting, student flow, and acquisition of needed faculty and staff. The prerequisite of *integration* describes the need for organizational solidarity and mutual support of participants. Decisions here relate to coordination of activities and the people associated with them. Activities such as assignment of graduate research and teaching assistants, coordination of student admission procedures, and coordination of curriculum planning activity are examples. Finally, *latency* refers to pattern maintenance and tension reduction activity. Decisions associated with development of relationships among faculty, staff, and students, and establishment of a culture and climate supportive of department goals mark this

prerequisite. Decision-making in each of these four areas demand some measure of involvement of department chairs and other administrators in ongoing administrative and academic functions of the department. And the fact that these prerequisites apply to all social systems, according to Parsons, contributes to the compelling nature of the behavior associated with each of them. Social systems will be addressed in greater detail later.

Again, based on the above indications from the literature, administrative behavior is assumed to exert an indirect effect on student learning. This relationship is depicted in Figure 1 as occurring through faculty work and the departmental social climate. The premise underlying the model is simple: To the extent administrative behavior supports the work of faculty and nurtures a learning climate where students are able to access and take advantage of available opportunities for cognitive and affective growth, then learning outcomes will be positively influenced. Conversely, administrative behaviors which hinder faculty work, and create barriers to development of stimulating intellectual and social climates have the potential for negatively impacting student learning outcomes. This premise provides the fundamental basis for the conceptual framework to be presented in this paper as well as the impetus for considering structural change in academic departments desiring to make student learning a common focus for departmental work.

Insert Figure 1 here

Importance of Studying the Link

With increasing calls for accountability in higher education in America today, the curious observer might justifiably express an interest in understanding how the work of administrators in colleges and universities impacts student learning. With the growth of administrative apparatus on campuses in response to increasing oversight requirements and expanding societal roles served by higher education, institutional specialization and fragmentation has increased. As the number of administrative roles expands, the gulf between administrative work and student work increases. Administrators' work is perceived collectively as unrelated to what many view as higher education's primary role - - instruction. Coupling of activities can become even looser as specialty functions, although necessary to the overall enterprise, proliferate. Further, the costs accompanying this growing segment of the professional staff puts added strain on shrinking resource bases, much to the chagrin of faculty, parents, and the general public, providing more fodder for outspoken critics of higher education. Stakeholders in higher education are simultaneously calling on institutions to justify expenditures and produce evidence of satisfactory student outcomes. The more able we are to make explicit connections between what administrators do and student learning, we are better able to justify what many consider to be vast and irrelevant administrative structures.

Watson and Stage (1999) have challenged professionals across the higher education community to think about their work in new ways such that students'

educational outcomes will be enhanced and relationships between input, process, and outputs of student learning are better understood. Donald (1997) believes that new insights into relationships and the components of learning systems are needed. Peterson (1988) calls for scholars and institutional researchers to find evidence of the linkages between student learning and academic management practices. In an attempt to make whole, if you will, scholarly work in the area of student learning outcomes, this paper will examine the link between administrative behavior and student learning and offer a conceptual model to facilitate its study.[1]

Administrative Work in Academic Contexts

Academic departments reflect the primary mode of division of labor in colleges and universities (Bess, 1988). Bess describes the rationale for the organization of departments as circumscribing faculty work domains (i.e. research, teaching, and service) around a non-hierarchical structure that gives precedence to professional peer control and academic freedom. Academic values have thus heavily influenced the structure of universities and account for the prominence of the academic department as the focal point for disciplinary research and student learning. Trow and Fulton (1975) enumerate the functions of the academic department as graduate and undergraduate teaching, research, consulting, public service, and university administration. Trow (1977) later added

[1] It is important at this stage to note that for purposes of the argument being made here, effects emanating directly from administrative behaviors which result in, or create, the contexts Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) examined are being distinguished from institutional or organizational effects on student learning. I would argue that if indeed, contexts of learning matter, then administrative actions or behaviors which shape contexts are likely to make a difference as well. While such influences are thought to be largely indirect, they nonetheless merit the attention of researchers seeking to better understand student learning outcomes.

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recruitment and promotion of academic staff members to this list. While faculty perform most of these functions, departments rely on administrators e.g. department chairs, research center directors, other administrative specialists, to manage and direct activities related to (a) resource allocation including staffing, faculty promotion and tenure, budget, and technology support; (b) instructional and research program support, including curriculum development and maintenance, graduate program oversight, and teaching support; and (c) student services, including admissions, registration, and more infrequently, advising. Many of these functions are managed by the department chair, a faculty member who for some specified length of time serves as the chief administrative officer of the department. Small departments are typically administered by a chair and one or two administrative assistants. In larger departments and schools, non-academic professional administrators often have responsibility for managing activities where faculty expertise or status is not required for successful conduct of the work. So while administrators are thought to serve functions separate and apart from academic activities, they are at the same time a part of the context for learning.

The academic context, specifically the department unit, will provide the focus for examination of the relationship between administrative behavior and student learning. It is here that administrative behavior has the potential for exerting the greatest impact on student learning due to the proximity of these administrators to instruction.[2] Birnbaum's (1988) work offers conceptual support for the choice of the academic department as the unit for studying the relationship of interest. His notion is that where linkages exist they

[2] By focusing on cognitive outcomes I mean to illustrate what may be considered the most remote link between administrative behavior and student outcomes. The idea then is if this remote link can be satisfied then the case for administrative impact on student learning is more forcefully and convincingly made. At the same time, I in no way mean to imply that administrator influences on student learning are limited to the cognitive domain. In fact, administrators also act as type-representative professional roles models (Cutright, 2001) through their leadership, management, conflict resolution, problem-solving, and consensus building behaviors.

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are likely to be stronger within institutional subsystems e.g. departments and other academic units, than between systems e.g. across unit boundaries. The academic department as a subsystem then, provides an optimal setting for the study of administrator impact on student learning. Building on the notion of the academic department as a learning context the following discussion sets forth a conceptual model for thinking about the link between administrative behavior and student learning.

Social Contexts for Student Learning

University departments have been described as social systems (Katz & Kahn, 1966; Sewell, 1992) Conceptualizations of organizations in the literature support the notion of subsystems within which participants enact their social roles (Birnbaum, 1988; Morphew, 1999; Peterson, 1988; Wheatley, 1994). Such conceptualizations commonly provide for overlapping subsystems supporting the idea that members often, some more than others depending on their roles, must operate at the intersections of these subsystems. One can then envision the existence of a number of social systems within immediate and contiguous environments. The point of intersection of various fields would describe a space with certain boundary conditions within which its participants enact their various roles.

Social systems develop for purposes of accomplishing the variety of academic and administrative functions existing in an academic department. Birnbaum (1988) for example, characterizes institutional environments as being comprised of technical, managerial, and institutional levels of responsibility. The technical level comprises the

research, teaching, and service activities performed primarily by faculty. The managerial level is represented by administrators who mediate between the technical and institutional levels. Drawing from Birnbaum, Morphew (1999) moves to a greater level of specificity using the academic department to illustrate overlapping environmental contexts. Morphew places the department chair at the intersection of the unit's technical core i.e. faculty work, and its administrative core, i.e. budgets, policies, and other administrative functions.

Smart, Feldman, and Ethington (2000) acknowledge the importance of academic environment as the primary mechanism by which students further their distinctive patterns of abilities and interests. Departmental environments and the structures associated with them can thus be seen as offering a "center of gravity" (Ewell, 1985) for undergraduate education. Drawing from the concept of environmental contexts, the learning context can be viewed as comprised of overlapping environmental contexts. Peterson (1988) describes the higher education organizational environment in terms of linked and overlapping environmental domains. Each domain, or subset of the overall environment is comprised of similar phenomena, activities or structures that reflect the ongoing work of the institution and its participants. Peterson's six environmental domains (faculty, student, external, administrative, technological, and curricular), are linked by policies, procedures and practices comprising an environmental core of sorts. His conceptualization distinguishes the relationship between the administrative domain and the environmental core in a way which allows us to appreciate how administrative work might directly impact faculty teaching and, through the faculty environment, influence student learning outcomes.

The conceptualizations of departmental social systems in the model to be proposed here extends the concept of intersecting contexts or environments to a greater level of specificity. In so doing it seeks to establish student learning as the common thread tying together the work performed in each of the various social systems. The integrity of each subsystem is thus respected, while at the same time ways in which subsystems might be integrated toward a common goal can be appreciated.

The major subsystems comprising the basis for the learning-centered model of the academic department depict activity in four areas - - instruction, research, service, and administration. See Figure 2. It is acknowledged that the model is purposefully limited so as to simplify the primary idea being advanced here - - that of integration of faculty and administrator work in the interest of student learning. Limiting the number of subsystems in the model also enables it to be applied to colleges and universities of a variety of institution types, recognizing that small and resource-poor institutions may have less complex departmental administrative structures. Certainly, the model can and should ultimately be extended for larger, more complex departments so as to incorporate other subsystems engaging the interests and energy of faculty, staff, and students, e.g. alumni, business and industry, and potential donors.

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Insert Figure 2 here

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A Learning-Centered Model

Pascarella & Terenzini (1991) point out the need for a "collective act of institutional will" in establishing a campus climate that puts student outcomes first. Similarly, Ewell (1985) called attention to the need for changing organizational structures to facilitate improvement in student outcomes. Ewell highlights the fragmented responsibility for student outcomes (e.g. the disconnect between academic affairs and student affairs) while at the same time assigns considerable responsibility to the academic department to act as a focal point for learning. Kuh (1993) has written extensively on the importance of creating an ethos of learning so as to raise the consciousness of everyone in the community that learning is the focus of all academic and administrative work. The cooperation and collaboration of members of the departmental community called for in this model are also consistent with Donald's (1997) belief in the importance of creating an institutional agreement for a learning community as a way of improving environments for student learning.

Additionally, Pascarella & Terenzini (1991) call for a shift in the decision-making orientation of executive and mid-level administrators toward one that might be considered more "learning-centered."(p.656). In such an approach administrators would consider how alternative courses of administrative action might affect student learning. That is, rather than limiting decision-making options to those impacting financial and other operational policy outcomes, affects on student learning outcomes should routinely be incorporated.

Pressed by such calls for a new focus on learning, a model for a learning-centered academic department is proposed as a way of both guiding further theory development

and framing an approach for departmental administrators desiring to improve student learning. This model, depicted in Figure 3 in the form of three concentric circles, places student learning at the core of all departmental work. Adjacent to, and most directly associated with student learning is the work of faculty. Through instruction, faculty impact on student learning is most evident. Faculty influence student learning similarly through advising and mentoring activities. Involvements with students in research activities is also the purview of faculty. While service in the traditional sense probably impacts student learning the least of all the categories of faculty work, influences in this domain can be expected to increase with the advent of service learning.

One noteworthy aspect of the model is the situation of the three traditionally delineated domains of faculty work - - research, instruction, and service, as straddling the boundaries of all represented environments. Faculty are free to engage with external constituents (e.g. disciplinary communities, business and industry, financial supporters of their work including the federal government, and the public at large); and in many cases their work demands it. These involvements suggest that influences on student learning extend beyond the boundaries of the department if not the university, a condition which while enriching the learning environment, necessitates the use of complex multivariate models to empirically decipher influences on learning outcomes.

Insert Figure 3 here

The outside ring depicts those activities in the department most remote from student learning, yet at the same time the most proximate to the external environment - - administrative work. The work of department administrators influences the work of faculty most directly and also serves as a link between departmental administrative activity and institutional administrative activity. The three domains of administrative work - - resource management, program support, and student services/support, depict the array of responsibilities department administrators have in guiding departmental activity toward the various objectives embraced by faculty, students, and numerous other constituents who have a stake in the enterprise. Each of these three domains will be addressed in turn to illustrate the specific involvements of administrators and the potentially far-reaching impacts of their work.

In the resource management domain, activities are related to the acquisition and allocation of financial, human, and physical resources in support of the department's academic programs. Hiring faculty and staff, coordinating faculty promotion and tenure processes, negotiating financial support from the dean and/or central administration, purchasing, accounting, and budgeting functions, and space/physical planning, are all examples of resource management responsibilities. Included also in this domain are the development of community-building and incentive systems to encourage the best efforts of faculty and staff and create a work environment that is comfortable and productive.

Program support describes all activity which aides faculty in maintaining instruction and research programs. Activities range from the most basic - - ensuring efficient support systems for faculty teaching (e.g. availability of needed materials and supplies, ordering of textbooks) to the coordination of curriculum design and program

development activities. Administrative work in this domain should consider the development of systems which support faculty teaching, research, and service roles so as to minimize the need for faculty involvement in routine operational matters. Systems of this kind which support faculty work ensure that faculty time can be devoted to its highest and best use - - academic work. Further examples of program support activities are instructional technology management and interfacing and building relationships with external constituents such as alumni.

Administrators are commonly charged with the design and implementation of student service and support systems and work in this domain can be most easily applied to possible student outcomes. On the matter of student selection, Donald (1997) believes that the characteristics students bring to the learning situation affect what and how much they learn. Thoughtful assessment of the fit of individual applicants with a department's unique learning environment is consistent with Holland's theory espousing the link between personality type and environment in student persistence, satisfaction, and achievement.. Reflecting on the utility of Holland's theory, Cutright (2001) acknowledged the importance of the role played by academic departments in developing this fit. Such assessment requires a holistic view of the applicant that goes beyond quantitative scores and academic preparation criteria. Consideration of applicant interests, experiences, learning styles, and career objectives, bring an added dimension to assessment of applicant fit. Similarly, at the level of the student collective, consideration of the profiles of potential student cohorts allows academic units to formulate student learning communities which are consistent with learning goals particularly with respect to student cultural and ethnic diversity, socioeconomic status, secondary preparation, and

special talents. Harvard University and Stanford University provide good examples of institutions that exert considerable effort in assessing the unique characteristics of applicants and their potential contribution to the learning environment the institution is committed to fostering. These institutions, unlike the majority, are pressed by virtue of the academic caliber of their applicants to look beyond traditional GPA and entrance exam scores in determining best fit. Despite their uniqueness in this regard, the benefits of deliberate attention to framing a desirable learning environment suggest a model that is appropriate to the argument being advanced in this chapter.

The self-selection assumption of Holland's (1973) theory of vocational choice implicates the important role played by administrators in the student choice process. If students are to choose learning environments consistent with their personality types, they must often rely on administrators for information and assistance in the choice process. A primary departmental function in this domain calling for learning-focused administrative behaviors is the recruitment of undergraduate and graduate students. It is the responsibility of department chairs and other administrators to develop reliable and efficient systems for attracting, evaluating, and processing applicants. This includes the provision of information to potential applicants by way of advertisement, up-to-date websites, and responding to phone and written inquiries.

Student advising is another activity included in the student support domain. While faculty are the proper providers of specific program of study advice and course content information, administrators can create processing systems that minimize faculty involvement in scheduling and other routine advising-related actions. Devising mechanisms for electronic scheduling and information access is an example of such

process streamlining. Advising systems can also be made more faculty- and student-friendly if steps are taken to help students "learn the ropes" when they enroll. It can take several semesters of advisement and registration before students become acquainted with departmental procedures, primarily because systems are ambiguous and inconsistently implemented. Without reliable and up-to-date information about "how things are done around here" students may miss out on valuable learning opportunities. Administrators might consider developing workable student support systems including orientation and social events to engage students in the academic department as their primary learning community.

Some readers may think that this articulation of administrative responsibility in the resource management, program support, and student support domains represents, in some cases, a usurpation of faculty authority and prerogative. There is no doubt the possibility that this can occur, however, the other extreme is inefficient administrative systems marked by improper deployment of faculty effort which detracts from the academic work undergirding student learning. Moderating the risks associated with each extreme requires careful consideration of the processes involved in each of the three domains so as to delineate the appropriate boundaries of faculty and administrator responsibility. It is suggested here that if departments keep an appropriate focus on student learning, and what systems should look like to ensure that faculty time and talent is optimized, that division of labor in each of the domains can be reasonably accomplished.

Applying the Model

The model can be applied to advance the study of student learning as well as to better understand relationships between college and university faculty and administrators. Empirical studies using techniques such as path analysis and structure equation modeling will be required to appropriately test the model. As such, administrator and faculty behavior, and student learning, must be operationalized in ways that enable reliable measurement. This section suggests approaches to operationalizing the key variables in the model.

Learning Outcomes

Kuh's (1995) taxonomy of outcomes reported by seniors offers a reasonable framework for measuring global learning outcomes. The taxonomy includes the following: self-awareness, autonomy and self-directness, confidence and self-worth, altruism, reflective thought, social competence, practical competence, knowledge acquisition, academic skills, application of knowledge, aesthetic appreciation, vocational competence, and sense of purpose. These would ideally be combined with student-solicited measures of course-specific learning to constitute an array of dependent variables describing learning outcomes.

Faculty Work Behaviors

The literature suggests various conceptualizations of faculty work are possible for measuring faculty behaviors in this model. Studies in the sociology of science have developed normative structures for the performance of the research role (Braxton, 1986; Merton, 1973) and the teaching role as it pertains to undergraduate instruction (Braxton & Bayer, 1999). Braxton, Eimers, and Bayer (1996) maintain that successful improvement in undergraduate education is contingent on the existence of norms supporting improvement initiatives. This proposition makes the application of the concept of teaching norms particularly appropriate in models supporting student learning.

Blackburn and Lawrence's (1995) multivariate model of faculty role performance and productivity examines variables in the work and personal environment of faculty. They identify three sets of factors which describe faculty behavior in each of the teaching, research, and service domains. Research behaviors can be related to proposal/ publication effort, time devoted to research, and grant activity. Examples of teaching activities that might be turned into behaviors are: the reading of articles on teaching, consulting with others on teaching methods/effectiveness, and preparation of class materials. Service activities fell into three areas - - professional service, e.g. to one's discipline; public service; and institutional service.

Administrator Work Behavior

The dimensions of administrative work have been previously identified as falling into three domains - - resource management, student services/support, and program support.

This section will identify a sampling of administrative activities, not intended to be exhaustive, that can be factored into a conceptualization of administrative behavior for purposes of the argument being advanced in this paper. These activities are enumerated as follows: coordination of student evaluations of teaching; communication of teaching evaluation results to faculty and students; monitoring of the relevancy of the curriculum; provision of instructional facilities that are accessible and equipped with needed technology; partnering with faculty in instructional activities; development of assessment systems for faculty work; development of procedural guidelines to facilitate student advisement and progress to degree; establishment of mechanisms to measure and assess student outcomes; work to create a culture which values faculty-administrator collaboration and partnerships; and, development and maintenance of workable student recruitment and retention systems and systems which provide for adequate student socialization.

Each of these activities performed by departmental administrators is associated with one or more of the administrative domains in Table 1 to illustrate the comprehensiveness of the domain structure in accounting for a complete spectrum of administrative work. While direct student contact is absent or limited in many of these activities, knowledge of student needs, preferences, and qualifications are important for administrators to appropriately consider the impacts of their behaviors on student learning.

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Insert Table 1 here

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It will be useful to derive propositions from the activities in Table 1 to guide the development of future research on administrative influences on student learning. Like the list of activities, these propositions are not meant to be exhaustive in that the varieties of administrative activity conducted in academic departments is limitless and varies according to context e.g. institution type, setting, etc. The following list is intended to frame a paradigm for researchers and practitioners alike who are interested in examining departmental change and restructuring of administrative work in the interest of student learning.

Proposition # 1: Student Evaluations of Teaching

Evaluation systems which solicit feedback from students on their learning experiences (i.e. classroom teaching and academic advising) and routinely provide this information to faculty, not only reinforce a student-centered departmental ethos, but aide faculty in adjusting pedagogical techniques and approaches to course material that produce increased student learning over time.

The key to a successful instructor evaluation process is administrative oversight for the purpose of ensuring maximum student response and prompt delivery of results to faculty. Department administrators should periodically review the procedures in place for accomplishing student evaluations and make certain that the system is efficient in accomplishing these objectives. As an additional evaluative tool for faculty members, particularly junior faculty, administrators should develop mechanisms for periodic delivery of information regarding services available through campus faculty development centers and provide resources as appropriate to enhance faculty teaching skills.

Proposition #2: Student Advisement

Administratively devised and monitored student advisement systems relieve the faculty of the burden of providing routine program information to students and prospective applicants - - activity which diverts their energies from scholarship.

The advising of students on matters related to their individual learning or in mentoring activities is the responsibility of faculty and integral to the student learning experience. The providing of routine information however, can and should be handled via electronic and other systematized mechanisms. Departmental administrators can facilitate information sharing with students by devising such systems, maintaining them, and keeping faculty informed as to their usage and availability. Departmental web pages offer an excellent and accessible vehicle for student information in today's electronic age. Information regarding admittance criteria and application procedures, degree requirements, course information, faculty areas of expertise, and suggested progression of coursework in graduate programs, as well as department news, routine forms and associated instructions, can be made available on the web. An additional mechanism to keep faculty informed as to the progress of their advisees and new advisee assignments would be a data base which gives faculty direct access to this information without the necessity of interfacing with departmental staff.

Proposition #3: Cooperative Instructional Activities

The deployment of administrator expertise in helping faculty to construct enhanced learning environments should be recognized as a wise and productive use of

administrator time as it can result in learning experiences for students that may not otherwise be possible.

The increase in service learning as a relatively new pedagogical approach is an apt example here. Service learning instructional approaches require the establishment and cultivation of community contacts and interface activities with the bureaucracies of both the university and the community agency being served. While the benefits of this pedagogy to student learning has been well documented in the literature and in practice, the time commitment for faculty is often prohibitive unless added support is provided. Support can come in the form of additional graduate assistance or help from administrative staff, but either way, commitment of department chairs to this kind of effort is crucial. Without such support, either students are deprived of a unique learning experience, or time spent by faculty on service learning instruction compromises effort that would otherwise be devoted to other kinds of scholarship, which also ultimately has the potential for negative impact on student learning.

Proposition #4: Faculty Assessment

Faculty assessment systems offering guidelines to assist faculty in making connections between research, teaching, and service activities will enhance faculty work in ways that ultimately benefit student learning.

The challenge to faculty, particularly in research oriented institutions where expectations for faculty research productivity are greatest, to balance the research, teaching, and service roles, is not insignificant. Further, revised definitions of scholarship such as that offered by Boyer (1990) offer guidelines to faculty and their

institutions for reconceptualizing scholarship in ways which allow for greater integration of all types of work performed under the definition of scholarship. As such, a conceptual tool is provided enabling faculty to link the many facets of their work to a common objective, which is suggested here to be student learning. Department administrators, particularly department chairs, must work in cooperation with their provosts and other academic affairs officers to devise workable guidelines for faculty documentation of their work in all of its forms and assessment procedures that value all work with demonstrated impacts on student learning. Guidelines and procedures should be explicit in defining appropriate evidence in demonstrating linkages between faculty work and student learning.

The proposed framework for study and these propositions place the responsibility for development of a learning-centered academic department squarely on the department chair. The four propositions share a common theme in terms of the role of administrators in fostering an environment with student learning at the center of all activity. A restatement of that theme will underscore its importance to the changes being proposed for academic departments: Insofar as administrators take seriously their role of facilitating the institutional autonomy, resources, and order necessary for the conduct of academic work (Downey, 2000), faculty time can be deployed to its highest and best use with respect to student learning, thereby enhancing the influence of faculty work, in all of its forms, on student learning.

Conclusions

The notion of decoupling of administrative and faculty work has legitimized an acceptance of administrative work as inconsequential to student outcomes. Yet evolving conceptions in the literature of higher education organizations strongly suggest that this bifurcation constrains institutional effectiveness and compromises student learning outcomes. If higher education is to meet society's growing demands for accountability, student learning must be placed at the core of all institutional work. This imperative is particularly applicable to the work of academic units - - departments, schools, and colleges, where administrative behavior is more closely associated with instruction than for administrative units responsible for institution-wide business-related functions. We assume an academic culture exists (Dill, 1982), yet the proliferation of non-academic functions on college and university campuses threatens the contamination of academic environments. Processes associated with creating and maintaining a learning-centered academic department will hopefully outweigh tendencies toward a prevailing administrative ethos by focusing all activity on student learning.

This model put forth in this chapter is premised on the notion that as student learning outcomes are being recognized as more important to the perceived success of higher education, the organization of higher education must increasingly reflect a new focus on student success. The way participants in institutional life, specifically faculty and administrators, view their work will consequently be in respect to its ultimate relationship to the stated focus of student learning. Such an approach to the organization of higher education calls for the evolution over time of a new organizational ethos

characterized by thoughtful consideration of student learning as the primary context within which all activities at the level of the academic unit are performed.

Downey (2000) has called for a stronger sense of academic citizenship in better balancing corporation, collegium, and community. In creating a focus on student learning, such community can only be enhanced in academic units. With student learning at the core, this new arrangement is conceived as an even broader concept than that of a learning community (Gabelnick, MacGregor, Matthews & Smith, 1990) in that the focus goes well beyond curricular reform. Yet Gabelnick et al. consider administrators who initiate learning communities as visionary leaders who "contribute to faculty rejuvenation, diversity of student opinion, and active faculty dialogue." All three are important dimensions in framing a culture or ethos which highlights student learning as a key valued outcome of organizational work. As initiators of learning communities, administrator's influence on curricular activity and faculty work is clearly established.

Some may argue in concert with Birnbaum (1988) that we expect too much of administrators, and the potential for incorporating even a small part of the responsibility for student learning is going too far. However, I think that what the proposed model calls for does not expand the area of administrator responsibility, but calls instead for them to think about their work in a new way. Such thinking is integral to establishing a community which bridges academic and administrative cultures in the common interest or students. And where synergies between the two cultures can be identified and refocused, those who benefit from the creation and sharing of knowledge - - faculty, students, and society at large, will be better served and consequently have richer experiences in the process.

Implications for Leadership

The new organizational ethos called for here demands a new kind of leadership focus in academic units. Taking a symbolic approach, Dill (1982) believes that academic managers must spend more time making meaning so as to better nurture academic culture and increase organizational participants' commitment and involvement in academic life. In the model presented here, department chairs and deans take greater responsibility than tradition might suggest for integrating other administrators and faculty, to the extent the latter participate in administrative activities, into a primary academic function of the institution - - student learning. By making and reinforcing the meaning of administrative work as supportive of faculty work, leaders become instrumental in creating an ethos of support (Kuh, 1993) for the academic enterprise by infusing consideration for student learning and the faculty work required to facilitate it, into the social structures and decision-making processes which define and support academic work.

A learning centered structure like the one being proposed acts to facilitate student learning. Yet a focus on *student* ultimately constrains the model's potential. The model assumes that administrator work generally impacts student learning indirectly, e.g. administrator behavior influences faculty work and learning climate, which in turn influence student learning, one determinant of effect size is demonstrated through affects on faculty work. Thus, according to the model's premise, to the extent that faculty work is enhanced by administrative behavior, the chances increase that student learning outcomes will be subsequently enhanced.

By spending more time on symbolic activities devoted to positioning student learning as a value underlying all academic and administrative activities, administrators increase organizational participants' involvement in academic life. In so doing they also create a more socially integrated organization. Increasing social integration is, according to Dill (1982), a critical aspect of revitalizing an academic culture that has been lost with the increasing devotion of institutional energies to market-based activities.

Finally, focusing departmental activities on student learning makes possible better use of staff talent in that the influence of individual talent can be spread more broadly across the organization. Here the individual talents of administrators are cultivated in a way that not only increases motivation toward organizational ends i.e. student learning, but inspires a culture of leadership (Lewis, 1994).

Implications for Research and Practice

The learning outcomes resulting from creation of a learning-focused academic department might also be extended to faculty. Bowen and Schuster (1986) believe that learning is the single unifying process upon which faculty research, teaching and service are based. Advancing their notion of the importance of learning to faculty work, the impacts of such a model on faculty are critical to its integrity. Because the effect of administrative behavior on student learning is believed to occur indirectly through faculty work, to the extent that faculty work is enhanced, so too are student learning outcomes.

The model for linking administrative behavior and student learning also advances Kuh's (1996) notion of a seamless web of learning whereby students are encouraged to incorporate resources from both within and outside the classroom as learning tools. Were students to find the academic department a receptive environment - - one where their inquiries have a high probability of being addressed in an efficient and forthright manner, and student academic needs are, more often than not, ably and reliably met, their exposure to a variety of learning resources will be more likely and possibly more frequent.

Establishing a departmental focus on learning provides a framework for redefining higher education quality or productivity from measures of input to those of output (Brady, 1999; Layzell,1996). Examinations of the outputs of higher education have been traditionally resisted, primarily due to a lack of adequate outcome measures. If indeed assessment of outcomes is thwarted by measurement difficulties, the model proposed here will move us toward a more comprehensive way of linking instructional and non-instructional activities in accordance with a paradigm that can be clearly understood by insiders and outsiders alike. As insiders, faculty and administrators' concerns for appropriate and efficient use of resources can be addressed in the model. Outsiders such as legislators, taxpayers, and donors, can be reassured that institutional officers recognize student learning outcomes as a common goal in all organizational endeavors. Establishing this linkage also gives a measure of added value to the work performed by administrators, and demonstrates the importance of, and need for, cooperation between faculty and administrators.

Use of models such as the one proposed here also reduces the uncertainty and ambiguity associated with student learning as an institutional goal, thereby providing increased focus to administrative decision-making. By demonstrating administrators' impacts on student learning, practitioners will be able to address cost reduction and restructuring without relying solely on the constraints posed by the professional needs of administrators (Guskin, 1994). Further utility of the model is that it will help increase understanding of student learning by stimulating the inclusion of yet unexamined variables associated with administrative work. And finally, the model will provide a focus for collective action in departments, which will serve to deepen the sense of community and unite faculty and staff toward a common goal with students as the ultimate beneficiaries.

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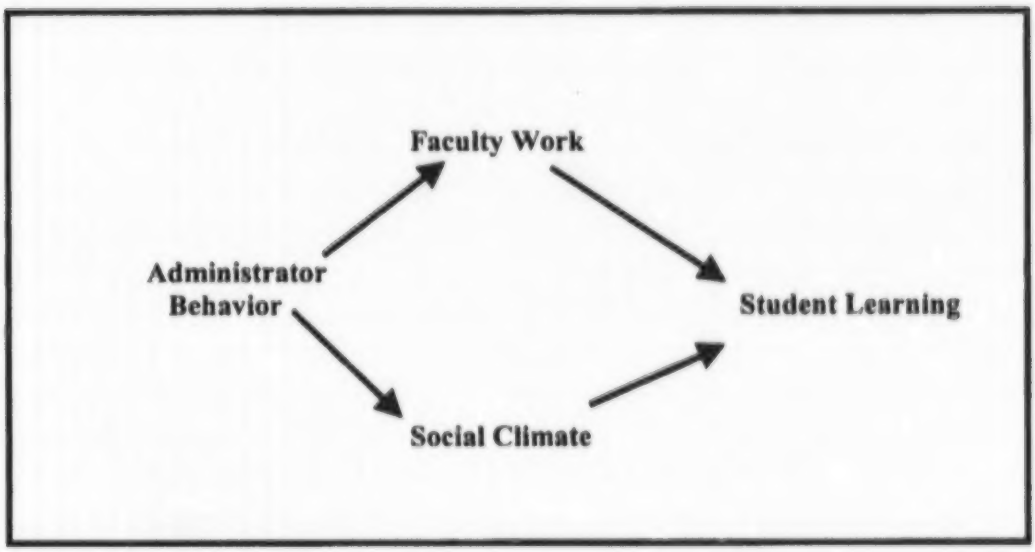

Figure 1. Administrative Behavior Influence on Student Learning

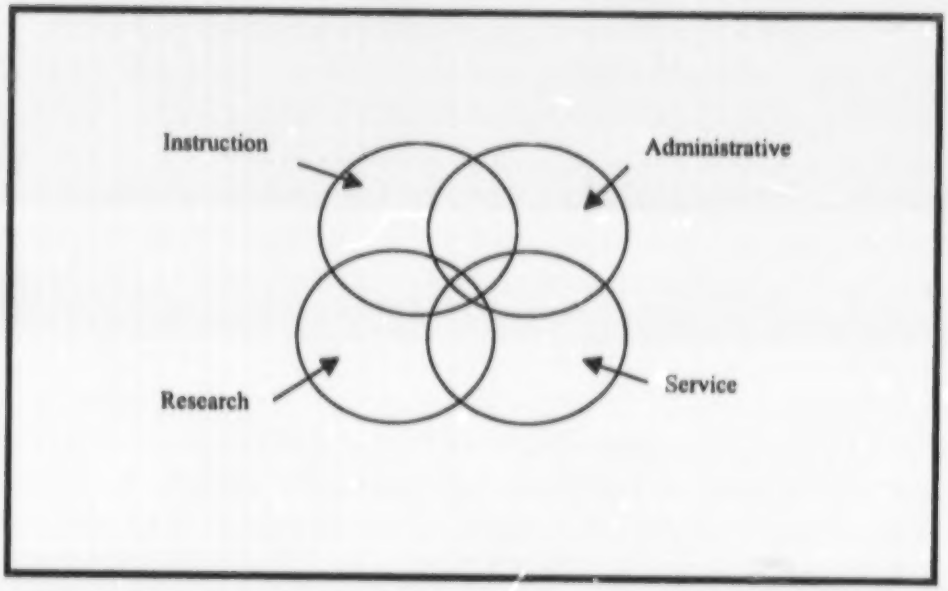

Figure 2. Overlapping Social Systems in Academic Departments

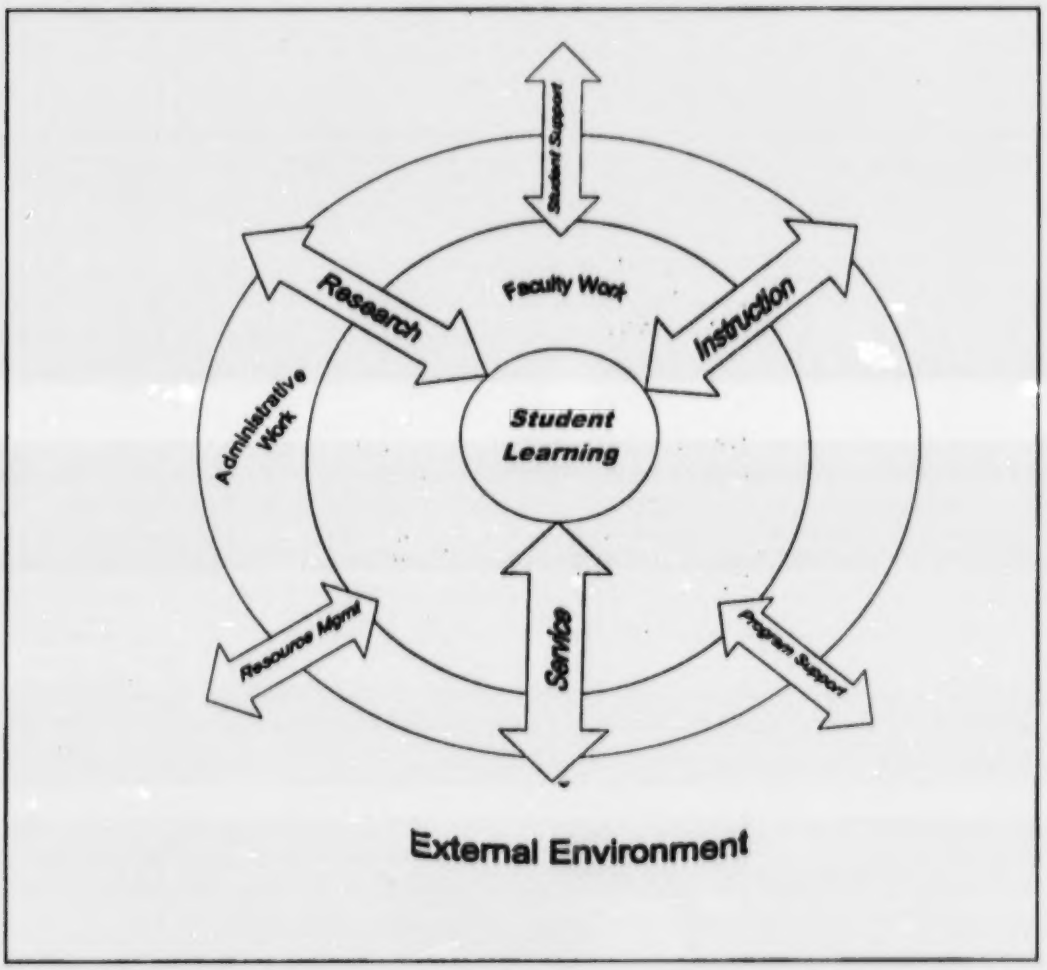

Figure 3. The Learning Centered Academic Unit

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Table 1. Student Learning-Focused Activities of Department Administrators and Their Associated Administrative Domains.

Activity	Administrative Domains		
	S	R	P
1. Coordination of student evaluations of teaching.	x	x	x
2. Communicating teaching evaluation results to faculty and students.	x	x	x
3. Monitor relevancy of curriculum.	x	x	x
4. Ensure instructional facilities are accessible and equipped with needed technology.	x	x	
5. Partner with faculty in instructional activities by understanding aspects of the instructional environment where administrative expertise can enhance the learning experience for students. (establishing community contacts for service learning, internship, and practicum activities, and serving a coordinating and organizing function for such activities; identifying opportunities for attracting financial support for instructional activities).		x	x
6. Develop assessment systems for faculty work which aide faculty in documenting their scholarship in all its forms.		x	
7. Ensure procedural guidelines are in place that facilitate student advisement and progress to degree.	x	x	x
8. Establish mechanisms to measure and assess student outcomes.	x		x
9. Work to create a culture which values collaboration and partnerships between faculty and administrators toward a common goal of enhancing the student learning experience.	x	x	x
10. Ensure procedures are in place for supporting student recruitment, retention, and socialization functions.	x	x	

S: Student support/services; R: Resource management; P: Academic program support

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